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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to show how child care practitioners and public policymakers can function in the seemingly disparate and often overlapping roles of professional caregiver, participating advocate, and public policymaker. Described are: (1) the recent expansion of and anticipated future need for child day care programs, focusing on families with working parents and emphasizing the use of family day care; (2) the identification of children's basic and universal developmental needs; (3) perceptions of childhood that affect adults' responses to children's needs, emphasizing the development of early education and child day care programs, especially in family day care; (4) conceptions of politics that underlie the current role of government in the formation and operation of family day care homes; and (5) means by which to express the relationship between the perceptions of childhood and the conceptions of politics in a pluralistic society. It is argued that persons in the roles of caregiver, advocate, and policymaker must function simultaneously in whichever roles are appropriate so that government will operate at a consistent level of consensus and compromise, so that government will respond to each segment of society that has responsibilities for child-rearing, and so that no one group will be favored to the exclusion of another. (A list of 79 references is included.) (RH)

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CARING, ADVOCATING, AND LEGISLATING FOR CHILDREN: ADDRESSING THE PARADOX INHERENT IN 'BEING BORN IN PRIVACY TO LIVE IN SOCIETY'

by

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CARING, ADVOCATING, AND LEGISLATING FOR CHILDREN:

ADDRESSING THE PARADOX INHERENT IN

'BEING BORN IN PRIVACY TO LIVE IN SOCIETY'

by Edna Runnels Ranck

Purpose

The purpose of the paper is to show how child care practitioners and public policymakers can function in the seemingly disparate and often overlapping roles of professional caregiver, participating advocate, and public policymaker in order to address the paradox inherent in being an individual living in community. The paper will describe the following:

1. The recent expansion of and anticipated future need for child day care programs, focusing on families with working parents and emphasizing the use of family day care, also known as childminders (pp. 1-3);

2. The identification of children's basic and universal developmental needs (pp. 3-5);

3. The perceptions of childhood that underlie the adult responses to children's needs, emphasizing the development of early education and child day care programs, especially family day care (pp. 6-14);

4. The conceptions of politics that underlie the current role of government in the formation and operation of family day care homes (pp. 14-20); and

5. The means by which to express the relationship between the perceptions of childhood and the conceptions of politics in a pluralistic society (pp. 21-24).

Expansion of and Anticipated Need for Child Day Care Programs

During the past six years the citizens of the United States have been increasingly bombarded with evidence for a steadily growing need for

accessible and affordable quality child day care for children from birth to adolescence and from families from all socioeconomic levels (Children's Defense Fund, 1988; Galinsky, 1986a, 1986b; Gotts, 1988). Other western societies are also experiencing similar increases in the need for child care, albeit under varying social, economic, and political circumstances (Child Care Action Campaign, 1988a; Kamerman, 1988; Olmsted, 1988). In America, for example, fewer than 10 percent of families represent the traditional family in which the mother stays at home to care for the children and the husband is the single wage earner, two-thirds of all married couple families have both parents working, and over 50 percent of all mothers are returning to work before their babies are one-year-old (Child Care Action Campaign, 1988b).

In the ongoing search for ways in which to expand child care program capacity that are both effective and economical, one type in particular has become attractive to American parents, child care professionals, employers, and policymakers. Family day care, known as childminding in other nations, offers part- or full-time care for a small number of children, usually fewer than seven, in the home of the provider or childminder. Narrowly defined, family day care excludes care provided by a child's relative; nevertheless, care of children in the home of a non-family member is a logical outgrowth of the universal and historical practice of sharing child-rearing between parents and among family members and close friends.

As the preferred form of child care by many parents, especially for the care of infants and toddlers (Fosburg, 1981), and as a relatively easy program type to expand, the promotion of family day care as a solution to a

mounting child care need has nevertheless raised serious issues that must be addressed by caregivers, providers, and policymakers at every level of government. Questions must be asked about what kind of qualifications should be required of persons providing direct care of other peoples' children, what kind of practices should be expected of persons promoting the development and solicitation of resources for family day care, and what kind of public policies should be shaped in order to regulate the delivery of family day care services (Feldman, 1985; Fosburg, 1981; Morgan, 1980; National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1984; Pegg, 1985; Ranck, 1984). In seeking answers to such fundamental questions, children's basic developmental needs must first be identified (Ranck, 1986).

Identification of Children's Basic Developmental Needs

Children are categorically different from other members of society by virtue of their age, their limited life experience, and their dependence on adults for survival and exposure to the environment (Kleinfeld, 1971; Pollock & Maitland, 1895/1978; Rosenheim, 1973). Children by definition are a vulnerable segment of society whose persistent developmental needs for special consideration throughout a long childhood require a consistent series of adult responses. Blackstone (1793) has identified and described three basic categories of children's needs: (a) welfare needs, (b) maintenance or labor needs, and (c) educational needs. To use Blackstone's eighteenth century labels for the purpose of this study, welfare needs of children include the fundamental and practical concerns associated with

survival, normal growth, and protection from harm, so that children can grow up in good mental, emotional, and physical health; with adequate amounts and kinds of food and clothing; with opportunities to develop positive interpersonal relationships; and protected from abuse and neglect.

Secondly, maintenance or labor needs of children require the availability and acquisition of material goods, despite the fact that children are relatively powerless in contributing to the economic development of a nation. In all societies the acquisition of resources has depended on the performance of work, so that in instances where citizens have been unable to produce products or services, other means of allocating resources have had to be invented. Children, with their limited ability to work, have presented economic problems to societies, the solutions to which have enabled children to acquire resources, but often at a high personal and societal price.

Thirdly, educational needs of children include the processes by which socially requisite skills are learned and necessary information is acquired. While skills and information are provided in various ways, every society must find the means by which to ensure the transmission of what is presently known and considered of value to members of the next generation.

The fundamental and persistent needs of children at all times and in all places become the foundation on which any given society constructs its responses:

> The moments which most affect the psyche of the next generation [occur] when an adult is face to face with a child who needs something. (DeMause, 1974b, p. 6)

Responses to the needs of children are applicable not only to examples of individual adult-child interaction; the same type of effort applies as well to the broader context of social and political responses. From a base of covert assumptions, overt policy decisions, and the laws of the land, each community, state, province, and nation has expressed its beliefs about and attitudes toward childhood by creating institutions whose responsibilities include providing for the protection of, provision for, and education of its future citizens (Erikson, 1965; Roby, 1973; Steinfels, 1973; Young & Nelson, 1973). Historically, the institution holding the most power over child-rearing has been the family with additional input from other segments of society, such as religious congregations and voluntary organizations. Beyond the intimacy of the family and the social milieu of the community have emerged political institutions with roles to play in the rearing of children. Over time, authority over children has been continually modified by the increasingly powerful presence of the state (Abbott, 1938; Bailyn, 1960; Demos, 1970).

Children's needs have remained constant throughout western history. Responses, however, have varied, largely because of the different perceptions of childhood that have been held by a given society at a particular time (Ariès, 1962; DeMause, 1974a). Perceptions of childhood have had an enormous impact on individual, social, and political responses to children's needs (Ranck, 1986).

Perceptions of Childhood

The necessity for social and political intervention in family relationships, particularly those between parents and children, has presupposed the existence of a gap or a breakdown in the capacity of the parents to provide adequately and appropriately for the developmental needs of the children. Implicit in Blackstone's Commentaries is the recognition that if parents failed for whatever reason to perform their duties, then other adults must become parent surrogates. The existing English laws that pertained to children reflected the prevailing practices of the time that operated to protect both the vulnerable children and the liable community (Schroeder, 1937; Stubbs, 1884; Tierney, 1959). Likewise in America, the Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts arranged for children's care when the family structure broke down through parental death or desertion (Demos, 1970).

Adult responses to children's needs are based on the perceptions of the "needy" that are held by those in positions to authorize and enforce responsive actions. Views of children held over time have fallen along a continuum: children have been perceived as similar to or as different from adults; children have have been perceived as having little value to society or as having some or much value; and children have been perceived as biologically determined or as a product of the social environment (Ariès, 1962; DeMause, 1974b; Kessen, 1965; Ranck, 1986; Rosenheim, 1973; Sears, 1975). In addition to identifying children's basic developmental needs, then, it is also incumbent on adults to be conscious of prevailing perceptions of childhood in order to select and promote the most appropriate programmatic responses to those needs:

- Welfare needs of children have most often been addressed by adult responses determined by a perception of childhood in which children are considered either as similar to or different from adults. Decisions to provide children's programs have then been made by society that protect or neglect members of an inherently vulnerable group (Abbott, 1938; Aries, 1962; DeMause, 1974b; Demos, 1970).

- Labor needs of children have most often been addressed by adult responses determined by the perception of childhood in which children are considered as having or not having value for society. Decisions to provide children's programs have been made by society that allocate or deny scarce resources to an inherently non-contributive economic group (Abbott, 1938; Bailyn, 1960; Farnum, 1938/1970).

- Educational needs of children have most often been addressed by adult responses determined by the perception of childhood in which children are considered as products of biological forces or of environmental conditions. Decisions to provide children's programs have been made by society that have established operational standards for a range of formal learning programs (Almy, 1975; Braun & Edwards, 1972).

The unique developmental characteristics of children under the age of six years have demanded a heightened sensitivity to the nature of the primary relationships between young children and parents as well as with other significant adults (Bloom, 1964; Erikson, 1965; Greenblatt, 1977; Murphy, 1944; Stephens & King, 1976). To understand the nature of programmatic responses to children's needs and to clarify the role of government in early childhood program formation and operation, it is helpful to survey the antecedents of the modern American family, and to review the historical development of preschool and child care programs for young children.

Historical changes in society and the family. Underlying the different interpretations of medieval and modern perceptions of childhood discussed by Ariès (1962) and DeMause (1974b) were the fundamental social and political changes taking place in conceptions of monarchy, the nature of government, and the structure of the state. A major expression of these shifts that took place in England, the Puritan Revolution, sought in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to integrate the religious authority of the time into the daily life of the people. One effect of the movement was to produce a drastic change in how the family and its individual members, including the children, were viewed (Demos, 1970; Walzer, 1965).

In the rise of the modern state were the beginnings of an increased valuation of the child and the initial awareness that children needed socialization into a life beyond the biological group. As the home came to be viewed as the basic unit of the state, its function as child-rearer changed to allow the child to be more directly influenced by the larger institution. Eventually the home by itself became inadequate to meet the demands placed on the educative function of the family. As a result, some homes were set apart for use in schooling, but in time, the educational effort moved out of the home entirely into a place designated specifically as a school (Ranck, 1986). As soon as parents were perceived as the principal educators of their children, the role of the centuries-old church-related schools in the lives of the family and the community changed to one in which the secular state played a larger part. The expectations of Puritanism transformed the schools for a purpose that more fully complemented their goals for society (Greaves, 1969; Walzer, 1965).

Development of educational programs for young children. Initially, children learned all that they needed to know about living in the confines of the home (Elkin & Handel, 1972; Tucker, 1974; Whalley, 1974), and parents learned about rearing children from relatives and friends (Greven, 1977), and from correspondence with and the writings of prominent authors and philosophers such as Montaigne (1580/1958); Locke (Bourne, 1876), and J. J. Rousseau (1762/1979). During the approximate same time period, John Amos Comenius (1633/1858) published The School of Infancy in which he detailed the curriculum of a "maternal school" in which a mother would implement appropriate pedogogical techniques in order to teach children about aspects of typical academic subjects. In addition to educational procedures and content, Comenius also recommended that children of the same age range be brought together under the benign guidance of the mother.

If Comenius suggests the "home as school," then it is possible to proceed to another form of education, that of the "school as home" in which children, possibly some an early age, were sent to the home of a skilled worker to be apprenticed and to learn the professional skill of the master of the house. Still another form of early schooling along this line was the "dame school" or "infant school" which Cremin (1980) describes as "a quasi-domestic environment under the supervision of a quasi-maternal female teacher" (p. 389). Perhaps the best known example of a dame school was Pestalozzi's Gertrude, "the Good Teacher by whom alone the world is to be saved ... [from whom] love and devotion overflows from the domestic circle into the community"(G. H. Hall, cited in Pestalozzi, 1781/1898, p. ix).

As time went on, infant (children) schools were established in locations outside the home. Oberlin ("Oberlin," 1911) and Owen ("Owen," 1911) are credited for the initial practice of setting up programs for working parents during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries respectively. The physical relationship between home and school began to give way to psychological connections exemplified by home and school societies (Cubberly, 1920), educational publications (Cremin, 1980), and the eventual intrusion of government into the practices and programs of education for young children (Woodward, 1938). Even then, the earliest colonial education laws in Massachusetts in 1642 and 1647 (Commager, 1948) did not so much take away from the family's educative responsibility as reinforce it. Nevertheless, with the passage of time, the social responsibilities of the American family gradually were dispersed among various social agencies and institutions, among them the public schools that developed throughout the nineteenth century. In addition to the expansion of the public school concept in America, there emerged the initial efforts to establish formal educational experiences for young children under the age of six years (Beer, 1938, 1957; Fein & Clarke-Stewart, 1973; Steinfels, 1973; Swift, 1964; Tyson, 1938; Whipple, 1929).

Functions of Center-based Child Care and Early Education Programs. A review of the literature describing the development of preschool and child care programs in the United States has suggested that early education has been used to provide services in addition to those directed toward young children ((Greenblatt, 1977; Lazarson, 1972; Takanishi, 1977). These purposes have tended to focus on three themes:

1. A means by which to accomplish social reform and to correct for conditions created by political and economic crisis.

2. A means by which to create opportunities to assist mothers to change their role in the family and therefore, to change the family itself.

3. A means by which to prepare children for roles as future public school pupils and as citizens in a democracy.

One significant result of the shift of responsibility for child-rearing from the narrow world of the family to include the more publicly oriented institutions has been both to expand the role of the family and to simplify the role of the state. In this light, the child care program may be seen as not only the "family writ large," but also as the "state writ small" (Ranck, 1986).

Both child care professionals and policymakers must recognize that in addition to the components of a basic early childhood education program that address physical, emotional, social, and cognitive needs of children, the political and economic purposes listed above must also be considered in program expansion. Yet, just as the pattern seen in the development of early childhood programming has been gradual and has expanded to include other forms of service without eliminating previous forms of care and early education, so too has the expansion of alternative educational programming not erradicated earlier types.

Functions of Family Day Care (Home-based Child Care) Programs. The National Day Care Home Study (NDCHS) conducted during the second half of the 1970s identified three forms of home-based child care according to regulatory and administrative structures (Fosburg, 1981):

1. Informal, unregulated family day care homes.
2. Independent, licensed or registered family day care homes.
3. Sponsored family day care homes which are usually regulated and a part of a network or system of homes.

Family day care homes, regardless of regulatory status or administrative control, are the means by which families set up a system for the part- or full-time care of their children in the absense of relatives, neighbors, or friends. Technically, family day care is provided not by relatives, but by persons known or unknown to the family. Generally defined, family day care is the care of fewer than six or seven children in the home of the persons providing care, almost always for less than a 24-hour period of time.

In the United States at the present time, it is estimated that family day care providers have had an average of just under 12 years of formal education, and that approximately 25 percent are single wage earners with a median income of just over $10,000 per year. Women who provide child care at home tend to earn less money than persons who care for animals in a zoo, who tend bar, and who park cars (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1985). Although a large majority of the United States have enacted some form of family day care regulations, it is estimated that a great many children are cared for in unregulated homes, and that most providers and the parents who use them do not perceive themselves in violation of the law (Morgan, 1980). Family day care homes are selected primarily as a part of the cultural network in which child care takes place in a home similar to that of the child's family.

Alongside the prevalant trend to select family day care for its similarity to family living and values, especially for children under the age of three years, is the nationwide professionalization of family day care providers. Brought about in part because of the decreasing number of extended families and the increasing number of working women at all socioeconomic levels, professionalization promotes the formalization of competencies (certification, accreditation, and membership in local, state and national professional organizations); career development (pre- and in-service training and preparation); job enhancement (curriculum materials and literature on the operation of small businesses); and career mobility in and out of family day care itself (Dimidjian, 1982; Gellert, 1986; Modigliani, Reiff & Jones, 1987; Ranck, 1984; Squibb, 1980; VanderVen, 1986).

The historical shift in the roles played by the state and the family that led to the development of early childhood education and child care programs has had a similar effect on the expansion and professionalization of family day care services. As more young children, including infants and toddlers below the age of three years, have entered caregiving arrangements supervised by non-relatives and by persons not known to the family at all, the risk of observing unmet children's needs has increased. Even though all but a very few of the United States have some level of family day care regulations in place (1986 Family Day Care Licensing Study, 1986), resistance to the implementation of regulations and requirements persist (Feldman, 1985; Morgan, 1980; Pegg, 1985). Especially noticeable in the United States is the wariness toward setting national family day care standards in the Act for Better Child Care of 1988 (ABC Bill; U.S. Senate 1885; House of Representatives

3660). To a large extent, these responses reflect the historical experience of a pluralistic society in which the prevailing effort must be to work toward providing enough appropriate child care services. To do less is to seriously underserve the needs of the children and to perpetuate responses that are incongruent with the level of services needed. This pattern has had a serious impact on the role of government in forming and operating child care programs:

> Unrealistic perceptions of childhood have led to government responses that have ignored the basic conditions of childhood .... [Such responses] have often led to the defunding or dismantling of programs when policymakers realize that the problems for which the programs were designed have not been solved. [In addition,] governments may also initiate responses to children's needs that are too limited in scope, that are inadequate in size and number, and that are unaware of society's expectations of government's role in children's programs. (Ranck, 1986, p. 258)

In summary, as the functions of all types of child care arrangements, including family day care, have expanded, the themes of social reform and political impact have become increasingly visible and influential in the formation and operation of programs, and, equally significant, in the content and goals of public policies. Living in society does not eliminate the condition of privacy; rather it brings it into a new and somewhat paradoxical relationship.

Conceptions of Politics

Government involvement in arenas traditionally considered to belong to the realm of the family or private organization has taken place slowly, gradually, and selectively. Despite the resistance to legislation

of intervention, the shift of control over child-rearing has tended to move from the arena of the family outward toward private institutions and then into the political system (Demos, 1970; White et al., 1973). The implementation of policies that govern children's programs is based on the assumption that government is closely interconnected with the life of the family as well as with private and public organizations. Child-related policies presuppose a viable role for government in the protection of vulnerable populations in society; in the allocation or denial of scarce resources among eligible recipients; and in establishing standards for educational programs for children of all ages, including those below the age of six years.

Statutes pertaining to children arise within the broader social and political context of all legislation, and are controlled by the limits set by the constitutions of the federal government and the various states. Public law-making in a democracy entails a more intricate series of actions than a chronological "innovation-adoption-implementation" schema would suggest (Thomas, 1975, p. 8). Complex planning and complicated procedures inherent in governing a large, pluralistic nation are particularly evident in the laws concerned with controversial social issues, such as those that affect education and related family issues (Bailey & Mosher, 1968; Berman, 1966; Eidenberg & Morey, 1969; Redman, 1973; Thomas, 1975). Social goals may well be considered on their merits alone; however, political decisions are based on other criteria: "A major task of the political system is to specify goals"(Wildavsky, 1974, p. 191); and policy goals are set <u>during</u> the policymaking process, rather than prior to its inception. Such efforts

produce "mixtures of values" in which "policies may determine goals at least as much as general objectives determine policies" (p. 192).

The mixture of values takes on special signficance when decisions, which are based on values, must favor one set of values, often over against another set. The implications of change-making decisions in a pluralistic society have predictable consequences:

> Because values sometimes conflict and because they sometimes compliment each other, those [values] actually relevant to policy choices are values of increment or decrement, that is, marginal value. (Braybrooke & Lindblom, 1970, p. 31)

Furthermore, changes made in the context of conflict, highly likely in a pluralistic society addressing controversial social issues, usually lead to

> [the] pursuit of incremental changes [in which] policy is directed toward specific ill--rather than toward comprehensive reforms ... it is the pursuit of long-term changes through sequences of moves. (p. 74)

Given the nature of combining values, controversy, and policy change, it is not surprising that socially oriented policymaking in the United States has tended toward ambiguity rather than unilateral, authoritarian decisions. Policymaking under these conditions is characterized by small, incremental changes within a constant climate of ambiguity that tend toward limited, yet progressive movement, rather than by either a continuously even development or a wildly erratic fluctuation (Ranck, 1986).

Implicit in the complex process of political and social change as it impinges on child-rearing issues such as regulations for family day care homes, is a persistent search for stability in the midst of diversity:

> Stable pluralism requires a strong underpinning of legitimacy. A plural society is best insured by the rule of law--a law made within the framework of an explicit constitution.... It also requires a strong and lasting inventory of psychological legitimacy, understanding, acceptance, and pervasive confidence in the composite system necessary to make it run smoothly rather than by fits and starts. (Kammen, 1972, p. 85)

Familial and institutional responses to children's basic needs have represented the "inventory of psychological legitimacy," while governmental legislation has provided teh legitamacy of the "rule of law." As Kammen points out, in America "crxises of legitamacy have been characterized by "crises of change" (p. 37).

To summarize, it has been established that government has a role in the formation and operation of programs for young children; that family policies are socially and politically controversial; that because values often conflict, policy choices reflect values of increment or decrement; and that part of the paradox of living as an individual in community is to need to have both psychological and political stability in the midst of ambiguity and diversity.

Government Policies of Intervention. Laws pertaining to particular issues do not emerge fully formed and intact; rather, like the policies they initiate, develop gradually and incrementally over time by moving through levels of involvement. The level of non-involvement is that point in history in which no law exists, even though efforts to introduce or pass legislation may have continued for years. The level of limited involvement is achieved at the time when the first law is passed. Such a law often reflects unfamiliarity with the issue and may lack adequate

provision for enforcement, may be underfunded, and may permit extensive exemptions under the law.

At the next level of involvement, a law providing direct involvement through the regulatory process addresses the needs of most all children under most circumstances. Such a law recognizes the need for government to be involved in programs, even those that pertain to young children and that are perceived primarily as the arena in which the family and the school have control.

At the most comprehensive level of involvement, government preceives that the absence of direct involvement through provision of services is a threat not only to the children but also to the state itself. Examples of such laws and policies include public school education, health services, and government-operated early childhood programs. Services provided under these laws meet the long-term needs of all children and contribute significantly to the well-being of the state.

Identifying a child-related law according to its level of government involvement defines the current perceptions of childhood. It is likely that laws operating at a limited level of involvement will reflect perceptions of childhood in which children are more like adults, in which chidlren of of less value to society, and in which children's development is determined either by biological or environmental influences. On the other hand, it is likely that laws that function at a direct level of involvement, either through regulations or by service provision, will reflect perceptions of childhood in which children are distinct from adults, in which children have more value to society, and in which children are influenced by both biological and environmental determinants (Ranck, 1986).

Family Day Care Regulations in the State of New Jersey as an Example of Levels of Government Intervention. An examination of the events that led to the passage of the Family Day Care Registration Act of 1987 in the State of New Jersey (Pamphlet Law 1987, Chapter 27) indicate that the pattern described above applied. It is known that family day care homes have operated informally in New Jersey for many years, and that the first known sponsoring network for a group of homes was established during the 1970s. With the growth of the number of providers who were members of an expanding number of networks, came increasingly sophisticated attempts to develop regulations. Despite the efforts carried out during the late 1970s, not until 1982 was the first family day care regulatory bill introduced in the state legislature. Over the next five years, the original bill, together with a second, similar bill, was re-introduced at the start of each two-year legislative session. Revisions that took place throughout this time period reflected the ambivalence toward whether the regulations would be mandatory or voluntary. For the most part professionals wanted mandatory regulations (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1984) in order to insure adequate levels of safety, health practices, and developmental activities. Policymakers for the most part, reluctant to create legislation that could be perceived as a serious intrusion into private homes, tended to support a voluntary system of registration. The latter proposal has the added advantage of costing less to implement since voluntary registration could expect to take a longer period of time to put in place. The final version of the bill, signed into law on January 27, 1987, provided for voluntary registration and authorized a report to the

legislature at the end of the first two years of operation (1989). Among the issues to be addressed in the report will be that of a recommendation to continue with a voluntary system or to move toward a manditory registration law.

During the decade prior to the passage of the Family Day Care Registration Act of 1987, New Jersey was in the stage of non-involvement in which efforts were carried out to determine what level of involvement would be acceptable to the caregivers and policymakers of the state. With the passage of Chapter 27, New Jersey entered the limited involvement stage in which some children in some family day care homes will be cared for by registered providers. While some persons continue to advocate for a more direct level of involvement, others feel satisfied for the time being with the voluntary system, particularly because of the fear of intruding into programs located in private homes (Feldman, 1985).

To summarize, the status of family day care regulation in the State of New Jersey at the present time is one in which the change from non-involvement of the government to limited involvement through voluntary registration has taken place over many years and has changed conditions in a relatively minor way. Nevertheless, the change did take place with the passage of Chapter 27 and the state acknowledged its reponsibility for guarding the well-being of some children. A publicity campaign to inform the public about family day care registration and the report to the legislature as required by law will substantiate the efforts to protect, provide for, and educate children in family day care homes.

Expressing the Relationship Between the Perceptions of Childhood and the Conceptions of Politics

Earlier research has suggested that in a pluralistic society in which various institutions have responsibilities for child-rearing, attitudes vary regarding the role of government in the formation and operation of education and child care programs for infants and young children (Ranck, 1986). Implied in the various attitudes is a range of questions to be asked of governments:

1. Is the government operating at an appropriate level of involvement in the formation and operation of education and child care programs for young children? Are the government responses to limited? To intrusive? Are the government responses inclusive of all programs and children, or do they permit exemptions?

2. Is the government operating at an approriate rate of change in addressing the issues involved in the formation and operation of such programs? Are the government responses modifiable? By whom? How easily? How quickly?

3. Is the government operating at an appropriate level of consensus, compromise, and coalition? Do the government responses reflect each of the institutions in society involved in child-rearing? Are government responses too closely controlled by a favored group in or out of government?

In a pluralistic society answers to these questions are expected to fall along a continuum ranging from satisfaction to dissatisfaction. Therefore, in a pluralistic society the relationship between the perceptions of childhood and the conceptions of politics would be expected to arise not from the consistent responses of government to the persistent needs of children, but rather out of the incongruencies of the responses. The

incongruencies would be expected to reflect conflicting views about the role of government in the formation and operation of early education and child care programs, including family day care.

In order to maintain a minimum level of congruency in conjunction with adequate control over program operation, the means by which to address the paradoxical nature of living in a pluralistic society must be identified. The means by which to express the relationship between perceptions of childhood and conceptions of politics must also be a paradox, something that allows for both similar and differing points of view. In the case of early education and child care programs, the law, whether mandatory licensing or voluntary registration, "appears both as an anchor to tradition and as a vehicle for change" (Haskins, 1970, p. 227). Regulations then serve both

> as [a] structure ... to incorporate the laws of the state into the operation of early childhood programs and to integrate some of the values of the larger society into the lives of young children, [and] as forum ... to incorporate research information about and experiences with young children into the formation of state policies for children and to integrate contributions of the child and the family into the wider arena of the state. (Ranck, 1986, p. 252)

The regulatory process has offered and continues to provide the forum in which to resolve the paradox between the desire for family control and the need for state's contribution. In the immediate case of family day care regulations in the State of New Jersey, in which the regulations are not required for all children in all family day care homes, individuals and groups must be identified who will function as

guardians of the existing process, so that voluntary registration is promoted throughout the state, so that funding for expansion of voluntary registration may be sought from both private and public sectors, and so that data are collected to include in the report that is to go to the legislature in 1989.

Persons in the roles of caregiver, advocate, and policymaker must function simultaneously in whichever roles are appropriate so that government will operate at a consistent level of consensus and compromise, so that government will respond to each segment of society that has responsbilities for child-rearing, and so that no one group will be favored to the exclusion of another.

Caregivers must be encouraged to acquire professional habits, to expand their knowledge base through training and advanced education, to join existing or establish professional organizations, and to have a greater impact on the regulations and events that affect their business.

Advocates must be encouraged to seek out others with similar views about child care issues, to confront those with different viewpoints in a positive manner, to obtain the skills need to approach caregivers, educational and human services professionals, executives and policymakers at every level of government; and to acquire both an historical perspective and a vision of the future of child care, so that they will know where they are coming from and where they are going.

Policymakers must be available to caregivers and advocates, and help them acquire the skills needed to work cooperatively over time both with legislators and administrators; must be willing to see all aspects of

of the wide range of child care issues; and must be willing to stay in the political child care arena for the long haul, for, just as with education issues, child care is now a permanent part of our society that is pertinent to children of all ages and to families from all socioeconomic levels. Children in this, our pluralistic world, are living in private and social worlds in which basic developmental needs confront individual and collective groups of adults. All members of all groups must be a part of organizations which foster cooperation and collaboration, and they must provide support for parents, caregivers, advocates, executives, and policymakers. Only in this way can the paradox of being born in privacy to live in society be addressed. To do less is to force the paradox further apart and to delay the resolution of the split.

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